

# MIDWEST CENTER FOR HEALTH SERVICES & POLICY RESEARCH

NATIONAL  
NEWS

## ***Annual Meeting Recap***

According to annual meeting registration figures, this year's Annual HSR&D meeting was attended by over 500 individuals including: health research scientists, clinicians, decision-makers, planners, Network Directors, and other non-VA researchers. The meeting, held March 22-24, 2000, was hosted by the Veterans Evidence-Based Research, Dissemination and Implementation Center, the HSR&D Center of Excellence located in San Antonio, TX. The theme, "Systematizing Quality in Health Care: Approaches that Work,"

highlighted research findings in Epidemiology and Prevention, Quality Measurement and Improvement, Special Populations, Interventions in Health Services, Cost and Cost Effectiveness studies, as well as general health services research topics. The HSR&D exhibits were expanded this year and included members from the Data Consortium (Planning System Support Group, Healthcare Analysts and Information Group, Allocation Resource Center, and Management Science Group), the HSR&D Resource Centers (VIREC, MDRC, and HERC), VHA Office of Special Projects and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Dr. Demakis, Director HSR&D Service, adjourned the meeting after the closing Plenary Paper Session.

*In this issue:*

- ✓ *AHSR Meeting*
- ✓ *ERIC Methodology Course*
- ✓ *Dr. Phillip Lee Visiting Scholar*

As a special bonus, the meeting coincided with peak Cherry Blossom time.

## ***Wray Receives Under Secretary's Award***

Nelda P. Wray, M.D., MPH received the 1999 Under Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research. The award was presented to Dr. Wray at the Annual HSR&D meeting in March. Dr. Wray was recognized for her significant contribution to VA Health Services Research. Her research using large health care databases for quality assessment, risk adjustment and patients' preferences for treatment and outcomes continues to have significant impact on our understanding of factors affecting the health of veterans. Dr. Wray was a pioneer in developing strategies to perform case-mix adjustment using administrative databases, a critical strategy when making inferences about cost, quality and effectiveness of health care. Acting Director, Dr. Frances Weaver and the entire MCHSPR staff applauded the selection committee on their 1999 choice for this award and extend congratulations to Dr. Wray.

## ***CSP Identifies High Priority Area of Renal Disease***

In a memorandum dated March 15, 2000, John Feussner, MD provided a list of high priority study areas in Acute and Chronic Renal Failure. These areas are: optimize renal replacement therapies; evaluate innovative strategies for the prevention and treatment of acute renal failure; evaluate novel intervention to prevent or delay the progression of chronic renal failure; evaluate treatments to prevent cardiovascular morbidity in renal failure; assess the clinical importance of ischemic renal disease and the effect of treatment on outcomes; and evaluate the effectiveness of models of health care delivery on health outcomes. If you are interested in this area of research, please contact Joe Gough, MA, Cooperative Studies Program Manager at (202) 273-8248 to find out how to submit a Planning Request.

## ***Administrative Officers' Meeting***

The Annual Meeting for HSR&D Administrative Officers (AOs) was held May 4-5, 2000 in Washington, DC. Administrative Officers from eleven Centers of Excellence (COE) met for dinner on Thursday to get acquainted prior to the meeting on Friday, May 5 in VA Headquarters (VAHQ). Ms. Rita Lysik, VAHQ, was the coordinator of this meeting. Dr. John Demakis, Director, HSR&D Service gave the opening remarks.

The meeting provided AOs with the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with others, especially the newly hired COE

representatives. VAHQ staff informed all attendees of upcoming changes to IIR guidelines, LOI submittals, Career Development forms, new initiatives and special requirements that VAHQ staff need to prepare required information in a more timely way.

Representatives from VIREC, HERC and MDRC each gave a brief presentation on the mission of their respective Centers.

This meeting affords the opportunity to network and find solutions to many difficult problems encountered by the HSR&D Administrative Officers.

## ***Boston Hosts Summer Epidemiologic Session***

The VA Epidemiologic Research and Information Centers (ERICs) presented the second annual workshop on epidemiologic methods for VA administrators, clinicians and researchers. Eight "tracks" were offered: Clinical Epidemiology and Clinical Decision Making, Outcomes and Effectiveness Research, Epidemiology Methods for Planning and Evaluating Health Services, Biostatistics, Introduction to Statistical Modeling of Multivariate Data, Evidence Based Medicine and Critical Reading of the Medical Literature, Use of National VA Data in Research, and VA Quality Improvement. The course ran from June 5 to June 9 at the campus of Simmons College, Boston, MA. **Dr. Denise Hynes** and **Ms. Diane Cowper** were among this year's faculty. The course next year will be held in Durham, NC.

## ***Former MCHSPR Pre-Doc Awardee Receives Prestigious Switzer Award***

**Theresa Louise-Bender Pape, DrPH, MA, CCC-SLP/C** has been awarded a Mary E. Switzer Rehabilitation Research Fellowship from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). This fellowship provides a year of support to fellows conducting research relevant to NIDRR's mission.

During her VA Pre-Doctoral Award, and while earning her DrPH at University of Illinois, School of Public Health, Theresa's work included the development of a neurobehavioral assessment tool, the Disorders of Consciousness Scale (DOCS).

She has continued to build on that work,

developing a newer version of DOCS, expanding the validation and including measures for dynamic cerebral functioning at Northwestern's Institute for Health Services Research & Policy Studies (IHSRPS). Her research involves collaboration with many sites including: Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Loyola University Medical Center, and Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

To conclude, during a recent interview with K.Kramer of IHSRPS, Dr. Pape stated, "This instrument tool could provide policy guidance on the treatment of patients with severe brain injuries, as well as help family and caregivers make informed decisions about care."

## ***AHSR To Hold Meeting in LA***

The Association of Health Services Research will hold their annual meeting at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles June 25-27. The theme for this year's conference is, "Research to Action: Shaping the Health System in the New Millennium." The meeting will be comprised of over 100 sessions on cutting-edge topics in health services research. Although the deadline for early registration has passed, researchers can still register until June 5, 2000. After that date, on-site registration is required. The on-line form for registration is at [www.ahsr.org/2000/register](http://www.ahsr.org/2000/register).

## ***Dr. Philip Randolph Lee Gives Special Lecture, May 23***

The Midwest Center for Health Services and Policy Research was pleased host a special seminar on May 23, 2000. Dr. Philip Randolph Lee, Advisor at the School of Medicine and Professor Emeritus from the University of California, San Francisco and former Assistant Secretary for Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services spoke to the Chicago health services research community on "Quality of Care for the Vulnerable Elderly." The lecture took place at 10:00 am in Building 1, Room E347. Dr. Lee talked about the rising costs of medical care and pharmaceuticals and the impact on access to health care for the elderly. He spoke in detail about the leadership role VA has taken with regard to assessing the quality care provided to the nation's veterans. He noted that the VA should serve as a role model to the health care industry in how to deliver health care services to patients. Dr. Lee stressed the need for the VA to disseminate information on the exceptional quality of care VA provides and commented on the contribution that VA researchers have made not only to veterans, but to the American people as a whole.

*Dr. Lee spoke in detail about the leadership role VA has taken with regard to assessing the quality care provided to the nation's veterans.*

Following the lecture, a luncheon was held. Dr. Lee then held an informal question and answer session with senior research investigators. Dr. Rita Young, ACOS for Research, thanked Dr. Lee for communicating his perspective of the VA to the audience and commented that VA employees often do not hear such positive statements about the VA. The day was a huge success and MCHSPR staff was delighted that Dr. Lee could take time from his busy schedule to visit Hines.

## ***Grants Submitted for May Deadline***

Three Investigator Initiated Research proposals were submitted this round for the May 1, 2000 deadline. **Diane Cowper** and Dr. **Larry Manheim**'s proposal, "Why are Some C&P Veterans Not Using VA Health Care," seeks to understand how veterans who receive compensation and pension (C&P) benefits from VA, but have not used VA health care services in the past three years differ from veterans receiving C&P benefits who use VA health care services.

**Denise Hynes**, Ph.D. and **Kevin Stoupe**, Ph.D. propose to study the Cost Effectiveness of End Stage Renal Disease Care. In this prospective observational study, the investigators will identify and examine the complex incentives for care for CRF patients in eight VA facilities. A particular focus will be to determine whether costs of providing CRF care and health-related quality of life (HRQOL) differ for veterans who receive their hemodialysis at VA versus non-VA facilities.

"Homeless Prevention: Psychiatric Care with Representative Payeeship" is a re-submission of Dr. **Kendon Conrad**. The purpose of his application is to determine, in a randomized clinical trial, whether a community-based representative payee program coordinated with VA psychiatric community care (CO-RP) can be more clinically effective and less costly than customary treatment for veterans who have no representative payee (RP) or RP that is not coordinated with their care.

In addition to the Investigator Initiated Research proposals, Dr. **Fran Weaver** submitted her study, "Pharmacological Management of Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) in Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)" to the American Paraplegia Society. The purpose of this study is to begin to add to the body of evidence concerning the management of recurrent UTIs in individuals with SCI. Specifically, a retrospective record review will be conducted to look at variation in treatment of recurrent UTI.

For a full list of projects that are in development, under review, or approved and funded at the Midwest Center for Health Services and Policy Research, please contact **Mary Jo Lopez** at (708) 202-2414.

**Cowper DC**, Longino CF, **Kubal JD**, **Manheim LM**, Dientsfey SJ, Palmer JM.  
*J of Applied Gerontology*  
Retirement Migration of U.S. Veterans, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990.  
Approximate publication date: **June-2000**.

**Hynes DM**.  
*Nursing Clinics of North America*  
Research: A Key to Promoting and Sustaining Innovative Practice.  
Approximate publication date: **Fall-2000**.

**Freeman VI**, Meydani M, Yong S, Pyle J, Wan Y, Durazo-Arvizu R, Liao Y..  
*American Journal of Epidemiology*  
Prostatic Levels of Tocopherols, Carotenoids and Retinol in Relation to Plasma Levels and Self-Reported Usual Dietary Intake.  
Publication date: **January 15, 2000**.

**Freeman VI**, Meydani M, Yong S, Pyle J, Flanigan RC, Waters WB, Wojcik EM  
*Journal of Urology*  
Prostatic Levels of Fatty Acids and the Histopathology of Localized Prostate Cancer.  
Approximate publication date: **December, 2000**.

**Freeman VI**, Laio Y, Durazo-Arvizu R, Cooper RS.  
*Annals of Epidemiology*  
Height and Risk of Fatal Prostate Cancer: Findings from the National Survey.  
Approximate publication date: **December, 2000**.

**Kubal JDK**.  
*Veterans Health System Journal*  
VA Information Resource Center: Your Guide to VA Data.  
Publication date: **April-2000**.

**Parada JP**.  
*Chicago Medicine*  
HIV and Chicago Community Areas: Policy Considerations from the Epidemiologic Trends in Poverty, Violence, and Poor Health.  
Approximate publication date: **Summer-2000**.

**Parada JP**, Shapiro D.  
*Infections in Medicine*  
A Case of Salmonella Abscess of the Ovary.  
Approximate publication date: **April-2000**.

**Parada JP**, Maslow JN.  
*Scandinavian Journal of Infectious Diseases*  
Clinical Syndromes Associated with Adult Pneumococcal Cellulitis.  
Approximate publication date: **Spring-2000**.

**Parada JP**, Maslow JN.  
*Scandinavian Journal of Infectious Diseases*  
Clinical Syndromes Associated with Adult Pneumococcal Cellulitis.  
Approximate publication date: **Spring-2000**.

**Stroupe KT**, Murray MD, Stump TE, Callhan CM.  
*Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*  
Association Between Medications Supplies and Healthcare Costs.  
Approximate publication date: **Fall-2000**.

**Stroupe KT**, Kinney ED, Kniesner TJJ.  
*Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*  
Does Chronic Illness Affect the Adequacy of Health Insurance Coverage?  
Approximate publication date: **April-2000**.

**Stroupe KT**, Forthofer M, Brater DC, Murray MD.  
*PharmacoEconomics*  
Healthcare Costs of Patients with Heart Failure Treated with Torsemide or Furosemide.  
Approximate publication date: **Fall-2000**.

**Weaver FM**, Hughes SL, Giobbie-Hurder A, Ulasevich A, Kubal J, Kinsian B, Lichtenstein MJ, Rowe J.  
*Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*  
The Involvement of Physicians in Home Care: Results from a National Survey.  
Approximate publication date: **June-2000**.

**Dr. Ken Conrad** has a new title! Around family circles he is now called Grandpa! His first grandson was born on April 25th at 9:27 P.M.. Evan Conrad Junius weighed in at 7 lbs, 13 oz. and is 21 inches long. Ken, have you bought the baby a baseball mitt yet?

Our own **Bridget Smith** became a new Mom on Mother's Day May 14th! Her new son, Alexander Charles weighed 8 lbs, 2 oz. and is 20 inches long. Mommy, baby and daddy are all fine.

Timothy V. Thornton, son of **Madeline** earned his BS degree in Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice Administration and Sociology, with a minor in Security this month from Western Illinois University. Congratulations, Tim!

ON A MORE  
PERSONAL  
NOTE

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## *Effects of Exercise and Testosterone Replacement Therapy on Elderly Males with Osteoarthritis and Hypogonadism*

Karla J. Williams, Jatinder Kaur, W.E. Langbein, Eileen G. Collins, Elly Budiman-Mak

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common chronic disease in the United States, second only to heart disease as a cause of activity limitation for men 65 years of age. Limitations in movement secondary to OA have been associated with decreased range of motion, chronic pain, increased joint stiffness, difficulty completing activities of daily living, weight gain, loss of independence, and increased susceptibility to depression. Aging also appears to be related to decreased testosterone production and may lead to hypogonadism. Hypogonadism can cause negative metabolic balance of bone and muscle tissue and changes in mood and sexual function. Researchers have demonstrated positive effects of exercise on physical functioning and pain management in persons with OA.

The purpose of this randomized clinical trial was to evaluate the combined effect of a 24-week *PoleStriding* moderate intensity exercise program [walking with modified ski poles in a movement pattern similar to cross-country skiing] and testosterone replacement therapy on measures of perceived pain and quality of life, exercise tolerance, aerobic power, range of motion and lower extremity strength in males with OA. *PoleStriding* increases the total exercising muscle mass and decreases some percentage of the exercise stress on the lower extremities, thereby providing an appropriate lower impact mode of exercise for training the cardiorespiratory system of persons with OA.

The goal of this rehabilitation program [testosterone replacement and *PoleStriding* exercise] was to improve walking ability, decrease perceived pain during exercise and improve quality of life.

### ***Dr. Mak's Most Recent Publication***

Dr. Mak's most recent publication was in the *Journal of Clinical Rheumatology*. The article title is "The Foot Pad in Rheumatoid Arthritis Measurement and Possible Effects on Foot Disability" Budiman-Mak, Stuck, Roach, Steigman. (J of Clin Rheumatol 1999;6:326-331).

Her research included the study of 78 rheumatoid arthritis patients. Using routinely obtained weight bearing foot radiography over a five year duration, Dr. Mak has developed a method of measuring foot pad which is simple, practical and easily reproduced.

As in diabetics, the rheumatoid arthritis foot pad eventually becomes atrophic. This measurement will help to identify patients at risk for foot pain or ulceration so that appropriate orthotics and soft tissue supplements may be recommended.



*Meet a Member of Our Senior Staff...*

## ***Elly Budiman-Mak, MD, MPH, MS***

*Dr. Budiman-Mak's primary research interests are related to patient care issues. In addition to several ongoing research studies, she remains active in teaching and mentoring young clinicians.*

Dr. Budiman-Mak joined the Midwest Center for Health Services and Policy Research in 1986, with a 5 year multi-clinic randomized control trial entitled, "Foot Orthosis in Preventing Foot Deformity in Rheumatoid Arthritis." It has been a rewarding and long-lasting relationship.

Dr. Mak earned her MD from the University of Indonesia in 1961. She taught at the University in Indonesia for ten years, then came to the United States and began her U.S. residency. In 1976, she began her career in VA. In 1983 she earned an MPH from the University of Illinois School of Public Health. Dr. Mak was the recipient of a VACO scholarship in clinical research design and statistical analysis in 1989 and, in 1991, she received an MS from the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

At Hines, Dr. Mak has been involved extensively in patient care and in teaching house staff as well as medical students. She was a staff rheumatologist and also the Chief of General Medicine Clinic (GMC) at Hines VAH for 4 years and has been an Associate Professor of Medicine at Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine since 1995. Her primary research interests are related to patient care issues and she was able to conduct research at the Center in spite of her very busy schedule. She was Principal Investigator on "Physical Disability in the Elderly Osteoarthritic: A Survey" in 1992 and in 1993 wrote a technical report on "Functional Status and Physical Disability of Elderly Osteoarthritics." She was given a grant by the Arthritis Foundation for her work as a Co-Investigator on "Arthritis Specific Disability and Informal Care Giver Cost." She served as Principal Investigator on the LIP study, "Feasibility of Exercise Intervention for Osteoarthritics."

Now that Dr. Mak has retired from her clinical responsibilities, she can devote more time to research. A present study, "Outcome of Testosterone Intervention in Elderly Males with Hypogonadism and Osteoarthritis: A Comparison Between Groups Receiving Exercise vs. No Exercise" is funded by the AMVETS. Recently, Dr. Mak and her research team members presented her work at the Society of General Internal Medicine's Annual Meeting in Boston.

She is currently collaborating with Drs. Weaver and Hynes on their project about women's surgical risk and outcomes at VA hospitals. Dr. Mak is active in teaching as well, and this year she is the mentor to a rheumatology fellow, Dr. Hasan Alissa during his research assignment in HSR&D.